

Message Text

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PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 NIC-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01

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R 010200Z FEB 75

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3168

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCOONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PEKING 0173

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CH

SUBJECT: THE FOURTH NPC - IN RETROSPECT

BEGIN SUMMARY. CHINA'S FOURTH NPC AND THE LEADERSHIP LINE-UP WHICH HAS EMERGED ARE PART OF THE STRUCTURE FOR CARRYING THE PRC THROUGH THE SUCCESSION PERIOD. WE POSTULATE A SERIOUS POLITICAL STRUGGLE LEADING UP TO THE CONGRESS WHICH RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF COMPROMISES. AUTHORITY WAS CONCENTRATED IN THE HANDS OF A GROUP OF OLDER LEADERS HOLDING INTERLOCING PARTY, GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY POSITIONS. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON HOW WELL THESE COMPROMISES HOLD TOGETHER. WHILE THE PRINCIPLES OF CHAIRMAN MAO HAVE BEEN ENSHRINED IN THE CONGRESS DOCUMENTS, THE DAY TO DAY IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES RESTS IN THE HANDS OF PRAGMATISTS WHO WILL PROBABLY EXERCISE STRICT CONTROL OVER THE DIVISIVE TENDENCIES WITHIN THE SOCIETY. THE QUESTION OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MILITARY LOOMED AS A MAJOR ISSUE, WHILE THE ROLE OF THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH LEFT IS

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STILL UNCLEAR. IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WHILE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THIRD

WORLD WILL CONTINUE TO BE STRESSED, THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS, WEST EUROPEAN UNITY AND IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH JAPAN WILL BE AMONG CHINA'S KEY INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE EVENTS OF THE SECOND HALF OF JANUARY HAVE PRODUCED A NEW LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE FOR THE STATE AND MILITARY ORGANS OF CHINA AND SET THE COURSE FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A DECADE. NEVERTHELESS, THERE PERSISTS A TENTATIVE QUALITY ABOUT THE DECISIONS OF THE FOURTH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS SUGGESTING IT WAS A PART OF THE PROCESS, NOW UNDERWAY FOR OVER A YEAR, OF DEVELOPING A MECHANISM TO GOVERN CHINA IN THE POST-MAO ERA. THIS PROCESS REMAINS FAR FROM COMPLETION, AND DEBATE OVER THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE SEEMS LIKELY TO CONTINUE.

2. ONE THING IS UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR, HOWEVER, THE EMPHASIS ON THIS NEW MECHANISM AS IT NOW STANDS WILL BE ON CONTROL. WITH THE NOMINATION OF TENG HSIAO-PING AS PLA CHIEF OF STAFF AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO AS DIRECTOR OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE PLA THERE HAS BEEN CREATED AN INTERLOCKING OF PARTY, STATE AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP WHICH IS TIGHTER THAN AT ANY TIME AT LEAST SINCE BEFORE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. WITH POLITBURO MEMBER HUA KUO-FENG HEADING A STRENGTHENED MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY, DISSENT IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO REMAIN WELL WITHIN BOUNDS PRESCRIBED BY THE CENTER. WHETHER MAO TSE-TUNG, CHINA'S INVETERATE PHILOSOPHER OF STRUGGLE AND THE TEMPERING OF REVOLUTIONARIES THROUGH POLITICAL CONFLICT CAN BE HAPPY WITH THIS OUTCOME REMAINS A MOOT QUESTION, AND INsofar AS A TIGHTLY KNIT STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL CONTROL HAS INHERENT WITHIN IT THE SEEDS OF EVISIONISM, WE ASSUME HE WOULD OPPOSE IT. NEVERTHELESS, MAO'S PRECEPTS FOR CONTINUING THE REVOLUTION WERE GIVEN AMPLE OBSISANCE IN BOTH CHOU'S AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO'S REPORTS TO THE CONGRESS, AND THE MEANS OF DISSENT WERE GUARANTEED IN THE CONSTITUTION. GIVEN MAO'S AGE AND FRAGILE HEALTH, WE SUSPECT THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ACCEPT AT LAST THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF HIS THOUGHTS AS STATE DOGMA WHILE LEAVING THEIR IMPLEMENTATION TO OTHER, MORE PRAGMATIC ADMINISTRATORS.

3. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF INDICATIONS THAT THE CONGRESS AND THE PLENUM WERE CARRIED OUT ADMID SERIOUS TENSIONS AND DEBATE.
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BOTH THE CONGRESS AND THE PLENUM WERE SHORT AND SECRET. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CONGRESS' CONCLUSION PRODUCED NONE OF THE STREET CELEBRATIONS IN PEKING WHICH GREETED THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS IN AUGUST 1973, ALTHOUGH SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS DID OCCUR IN SHANGHAI, SHENYANG, AND PRESUMABLY OTHER CITIES. A CHINESE LOCAL EMPLOYEE OF ONE OF THE EMBASSIES IN PEKING WHEN ASKED WHY THERE WERE NO DEMONSTRATIONS HERE, REPLIED "WE WERE NOT ENCOURAGED TO DO SO." FINALLY, THE FAILURE TO

MENTION THE NPC IN THE NEW YEAR'S EDITORIAL SUGGESTS THAT AS LATE AS ONE WEEK BEFORE THE DECISION TO CONVENE THE CONGRESS THERE WAS UNCERTAINTY THAT IT COULD BE PULLED OFF.

4. WHAT WERE THE CONFLICTS WHICH LED TO THIS UNCERTAINTY?
ALMOST CERTAINLY, A MAJOR FOCUS OF CONTENTION WAS THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE. IT HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONTINUING DEBATE FOR OVER A YEAR, YET IN HIS REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT CHOU SCARCELY MENTIONED THE ROLE OF THE PLA. WE NOW HAVE INDICATIONS THAT DECISIONS ON THE APPOINTMENTS OF TENG AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO CAME JUST BEFORE THE SECOND PLENUM CONVENED, SUGGESTING THAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN THE MILITARY WHO HAD THE POTENTIAL TO FORCE ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT OF THE CONGRESS. WHILE TENG OBVIOUSLY SERVES TO STRENGTHEN EVEN FURTHER THE PARTY'S CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY, WE WOULD VENTURE THE GUESS THAT BOTH HE AND DEFENSE MINISTER YEH CHIEN-YING WERE CHOSEN AS COMPROMISE FIGURES ACCEPTABLE TO THE REGIONAL COMMANDERS. THE JOB OF ENFORCING PARTY CONTROL WILL FALL TO CHANG CHUN-CHAO, A MAN WHO APPEARS TO HAVE THE PREMIER'S CONFIDENCE. THIS LEADERSHIP LINE-UP MAY THUS AGAIN BE TRANSITIONAL UNTIL AN ACCEPTABLE BALANCE OF CONTROL BETWEEN PARTY AND ARMY AND BETWEEN FACTIONAL ELEMENTS WITHIN THE PLA CAN BE WORKED OUT.

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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

5. ANOTHER POSSIBLE AREA OF DISPUTE WAS IDEOLOGY--
WHETHER CHINA'S LINE SHOULD BE GUIDED BY A RADICAL
REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH OR MORE PRACTICAL PRECEPTS.
THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION OVER THE
APPARENT DEFEAT OF THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE LEFT
WITHIN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP. CERTAINLY, REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE "REVOLUTIONARY MASSES" AND YOUTH GOT RATHER
SHORT SHRIFT AT THE CONGRESS. TWO OBSCURE FIGURES,
WU KUEI-HSIEN AND SUN CHIEN, WERE NAMED VICE PREMIERS
AND APPARENTLY REPRESENT THE YOUTH IN THE
THREE WAY COMBINATION OF OLD, MIDDLE AGED AND YOUNG
AMONG THE VICE PREMIERS. THEY MAY LARGELY HAVE BEEN
APPOINTED AS WINDOW DRESSING OR FOR THE PURPOSE OF
POLITICAL TUTELAGE, HOWEVER, SINCE WE HAKBSHEARD
LITTLE OF WU KUEI-HSIEN SINCE HER NOMINATION AS AN
ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO AND SUN IS A VIRTUAL
UNKNOWN. THE PRINCIPAL FIGURES ON THE LEFT, WANG
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HUNG-WEN, CHIANG CHING AND YAO WEN-YUAN, PLAYED LITTLE
ROLE AT THE CONGRESS PROCEEDINGS, AND THEIR FUTURE
ROLES IN CHINA'S POWER STRUCTURE REMAIN CLOUDY.
CHIANG CHING SEEMS TO HAVE WANTED A GOVERNMENT POST
WHICH WOULD GIVE HER AN IMPORTANT ROLE, MOST LIKELY IN
THE REALMS OF CULTURE OR EDUCATION. WE WERE NOT
SURPRISED THAT WANG HUNG-WEN DID NOT RECEIVE A POST IN
THE STATE HIERARCHY UNDER CHOU. WANG, WE FEEL, WOULD
BE UNLIKELY TO SEEK SUCH A POSITION, PARTICULARLY IF,
AS RUMORED, HE IS BEING GROOMED FOR PARTY CHAIRMAN, AND
HIS INSERTION AS A VICE PREMIER RANKING TENG SIMPLY
WOULD NOT FIT THE PLANS APPARENTLY LAID OUT BY CHOU
EN-LAI. WHILE CHIANG CHING FAILED TO RECEIVE A
POST IN THE STATE COUNCIL DESPITE HER REPEATED
IDENTIFICATION LAST FALL AS ONE OF CHINA'S "STATE
LEADERS", THE NEW MINISTER OF CULTURE (A RELATIVE
NON-ENTITY BEST KNOWN FOR HAVING WRITTEN THE SCORES
OF SEVERAL REVOLUTIONARY OPERAS) WOULD APPEAR
ACCEPTABLE TO HER. YAO WEN-YUAN, LIKE WANG, MAY HAVE
OPTED FOR A PURELY PARTY ROLE. HIS APPEARANCE WITH
A POLISH SPLINTER PARTY "SECRETARY GENERAL" IMMEDIATELY
AFTER THE CONGRESS SUGGESTS HE MAY BE TAKING ON NEW
FUNCTIONS. IN SHORT, WHETHER THE LEFT WAS SHUT OUT
OR STAYED OUT IS HARD TO SAY AT THIS POINT, AND THEIR
APPEARANCES AND ACTIVITIES WILL BEAR CLOSE WATCHING IN
THE COMING MONTHS.

6. INTERNATIONALLY, WHILE THE THIRD WORLD WAS DESCRIBED BY CHOU EN-LAI AS "THE MAIN FORCE IN COMBATTING COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM AND HEGEMONISM", CHINA'S MAJOR PREOCCUPATION CLEARLY IS WITH WESTERN EUROPE, JAPAN AND THE SUPERPOWERS. CHOU OFFERED A RINGING PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT FOR WEST EUROPEAN UNITY, AND IN THE CASE OF JAPAN SPOKE FOR THE FIRST TIME OF WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE "JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE" IN PROMOTING FRIENDLY RELATIONS. JAPANESE DIPLOMATS HERE HAVE ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO CHOU'S TREATMENT OF JAPAN IN THE WORK REPORT AND SEE IT AS A SIGN THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. (CHOU'S ALMOST SIMULTANEOUS ADMONITION TO VISITING JAPANESE LDP
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LEADER HORI ON JAPAN'S NEED TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. IS AN INTERESTING EXTENSION OF THIS POINT.) IN CONTRAST, INDOCHINA WAS BARELY MENTIONED, POSSIBLY REFLECTING THE CHILL THAT SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED BETWEEN PEKING AND HANOI. IN SIMILAR FASHION, PRC LEADERS HAVE DOWNPLAYED THE IMPORTANCE OF INDOCHINA IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH VISITING FOREIGN STATESMEN.

7. IN CONCLUSION, THE EVENTS OF THE LAST TWO WEEKS HAVE PRODUCED AN ORDER ORIENTED, PRAGMATIC STRUCTURE TO TAKE CHINA THROUGH THE PERIOD OF LEADERSHIP TRANSITION. IT WAS NOT DONE EASILY, AND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW WELL THE COMPROMISES WILL HOLD TOGETHER. WE ASSUME THEY WILL, AT LEAST OVER THE SHORT TERM OF THE NEXT YEAR, AND THAT DOMESTICALLY THE EMPHASIS WILL BE ON INCREASING PRODUCTION UNDER TIGHT POLITICAL CONTROL, WHILE INTERNATIONALLY PEKING WILL CONTINUE BASICALLY CAUTIOUS POLICIES AIMED AT UNDERCUTTING THE SOVIET UNION AND LIMITING THE IMPACT OF U.S.-SOVIET DETENTE. THE EMPHASIS STILL REMAINS ON INTERIM, TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, HOWEVER, AND NEW POLITICAL BATTLE REMAIN TO BE FOUGHT.
HOLDRIDGE

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